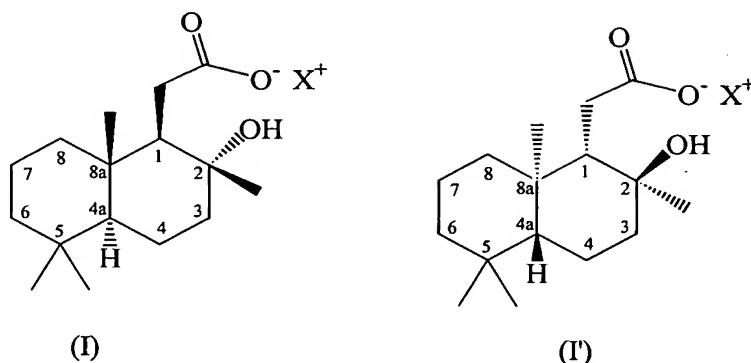


What is claimed is:

1. A compound of formula (I) or (I')



wherein X represents an optically active enantiomer of (2-hydroxy-1-methyl-2-phenylethyl)methylammonium.

2. A process for obtaining a compound of formula (I) or (I'), as defined in claim 1, said process being characterized in that

- a) it comprises the treatment of [(1RS,2RS,4aSR,8aSR)-2-hydroxy-2,5,5,8a-tetramethyldecahydronaphthalen-1-yl]acetic acid with an optically active enantiomer of 2-(methylamino)-1-phenyl-1-propanol, or the treatment of an alkaline salt of [(1RS,2RS,4aSR,8aSR)-2-hydroxy-2,5,5,8a-tetramethyldecahydronaphthalen-1-yl]acetic acid with an ammonium salt obtainable by the reaction of an optically active enantiomer of 2-(methylamino)-1-phenyl-1-propanol with an acid having a  $pK_a$  below 5; and
- b) said treatment is performed in a solvent wherein the compounds of formula (I) or (I') have different solubilities.

3. A process according to claim 2, wherein the solvent is a C<sub>6</sub>-C<sub>9</sub> aromatic solvents, a C<sub>6</sub>-C<sub>10</sub> petroleum fraction or hydrocarbon, a C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>2</sub> halogenated solvent, a C<sub>4</sub>-C<sub>10</sub> ether, a C<sub>3</sub>-C<sub>10</sub> ester, a C<sub>3</sub>-C<sub>10</sub> alcohol or mixtures thereof.

4. A process according to claim 3, wherein the solvent is selected from the group consisting of anhydrous tetrahydrofuran, toluene, xylene, benzene or cyclohexane.

5. A process according to claim 2, wherein the optically active enantiomer of  
5 2-(methylamino)-1-phenyl-1-propanol is (1R,2R)-2-(methylamino)-1-phenyl-1-propanol  
or (1S,2S)-2-(methylamino)-1-phenyl-1-propanol.

6. A process according to claim 2, wherein the acid having a  $pK_a$  below 5 is  
selected from the group consisting of HX, wherein X is a halide,  $H_2SO_4$ ,  $HNO_3$ ,  $H_3PO_4$ ,  
10  $HPF_6$ ,  $HBF_4$ ,  $HClO_4$ ,  $C_1$ - $C_{10}$  sulphonic acids, and  $C_1$ - $C_{10}$  mono-, di- or tri-carboxylic acid.

7. A process for optical resolution of a compound of [(1RS,2RS,4aSR,8aSR)-  
2-hydroxy-2,5,5,8a-tetramethyldecahydronaphthalen-1-yl]acetic acid or an alkaline salt  
thereof, which comprises treating the compound with an optically active enantiomer of  
15 2-(methylamino)-1-phenyl-1-propanol or an ammonium salt thereof.

8. A process according to claim 7, wherein the optically active enantiomer is  
obtainable by the reaction of an optically active enantiomer of 2-(methylamino)-1-phenyl-  
1-propanol with an acid having a  $pK_a$  below 5.

20 9. A process for obtaining (+)-sclareolide or (-)-sclareolide which comprises  
treating a compound of formula (I) or (I') respectively, defined as in claim 1, with an acid  
having a  $pK_a$  below 5 and by a thermal treatment at a temperature comprised between  
60°C and 150°C.

25 10. A process for obtaining (+)-sclareolide or (-)-sclareolide which comprises  
hydrolyzing ( $\pm$ )-sclareolide into a corresponding [(1RS,2RS,4aSR,8aSR)-2-hydroxy-  
2,5,5,8a-tetramethyldecahydronaphthalen-1-yl]acetic acid or a salt thereof.

30 11. A process for obtaining (+)-sclareolide or (-)-sclareolide which comprises  
a process according to claim 2.

12. A process for obtaining (+)-sclareolide or (–)-sclareolide which comprises treating a compound of formula I or I' as defined in claim 1 as an intermediate or a starting material under conditions that favor optical resolution of the (+)-sclareolide or (–)-sclareolide.